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Appl. No. 10/686,546

Amdt. dated March 24, 2006

Reply to Office Action of September 21, 2005

PATENT**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Claims 1 – 7, 9 – 16 and 21 are pending. Claim 9 has been amended. Claims 8 and 17–20 have been canceled. Claim 21 has been added. The Office has rejected claims 1 – 7 and 9 – 16. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application in view of the amendments and remarks made herein.

Claims 1 – 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,277,350 (“Thornbury”); Claims 6 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Thornbury in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,868,348 (“Bulman”); Claim 13 and 15 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Tiano in view of Thornbury, and further in view of Bulman; and Claim 16 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Tiano in view of Thornbury, and further in view of admitted prior art.

Claims 1 – 7

Independent Claim 1 stands rejected over Thornbury. The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection because Thornbury does not teach or suggest all of the limitations of Claim 1. Specifically, Claim 1 requires a tool with “a proximal portion having a first flange connected with a shaft extending from the flange and adapted for engagement with a powered mechanical rotation device,” as well as “a distal portion having a second flange.” However, Thornbury teaches a tool with a *distal* portion with a shaft for attachment to a rotation device, rather than a proximal portion having a shaft as required by Claim 1 (Thornbury, col. 3, ll. 7-22 and figs. 2 and 3).

Independent Claim 1 is thus believed to be patentable over the cited art. Claims 2 – 7 depend from Claim 1 and are therefore also believed to be patentable by virtue of their dependence from a patentable claim.

Claims 9 – 16

Independent Claims 9 stands rejected over Tiano in view of Thornbury. The Office Action thereby proposes to combine the teachings of Tiano with the teachings of Thornbury to render Claims 9 obvious.

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The applicant has amended Claim 9 to contain similar limitations to those which are believed to make Claim 1 allowable, namely that the method comprises attaching an end of the filament to a tool having a column "coupled with a proximal flange and a distal flange," and thereafter rotating the "proximal flange." Tiano does not teach all of the limitations of the amended Claim 9. Therefore, the cited portions of Tiano and Thornbury, as discussed regarding Claim 1, do not disclose all the limitations of Claim 9.

Since the cited art fails to disclose at least one of the limitations of Claim 9 it is believed to be patentable. Claims 10 – 16 depend from Claim 9 and are therefore also believed to be patentable by virtue of their dependence from a patentable claim.

Claims 17 – 20

The Applicant has canceled Claims 17 through 20.

Claim 21

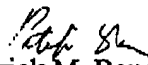
Newly added independent Claim 21 is supported by the original disclosure at, for example, original Claims 1 and 6; page 4, lines 15-18; page 6, lines 15-18; and Figures 3B and 4B.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 303-571-4000.

Respectfully submitted,


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